

**WALSALL COLLEGE
MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE LEARNING & QUALITY COMMITTEE
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 16 FEBRUARY 2022 AT 1630 HRS
VENUE: BOARDROOM (A339), WISEMORE, AND TEAMS**

PRESENT:	Paul Averis Mary Mahoney (on Teams) Heather Lodge Rani Sahota	Chair
TOGETHER WITH:	David Turner Richard Brennan James Norris Rachael Smith (Item 22.22) Victoria Lynn-Robinson (Item 23.22) Alison Buick	Assistant Principal Quality and HE Assistant Principal Curriculum Assistant Principal Commercial Development Director of Apprenticeships and Workbased Learning HE Development Manager Clerk to the Corporation
APOLOGIES:	Malissa Clarke	

14.22 CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and thanked them for their attendance. The efforts of the staff in producing a comprehensive set of papers were noted.

Thanks were expressed to the previous Chair, Alan Woods, for his work in leading the Committee.

15.22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Malissa Clarke.

16.22 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no additional declarations made.

17.22 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 29 September 2021, having been circulated, were taken as read and approved.

18.22 MATTERS ARISING

Governors reviewed the Action Points Record for Learning and Quality Committee and noted the following:

Item 35.21

A Levels were discussed at the October training day as agreed and at a subsequent meeting in December 2021. An update would be in the Curriculum report later in the agenda.

Item 06.22.1

Reports were now including a variety of data formats as agreed.

Item 06.22.2

It was agreed to invite the Careers Coordinator to give a presentation at the next meeting in June 2022.

Item 07.22

The A Level discussion had taken place as agreed.

Item 09.22

The review of online learning had been completed and would be re-visited as part of curriculum planning for 2022/23. It was suggested and agreed that a model for online learning in each curriculum area be considered. This could be useful for articulating intent and implementation for Ofsted.

Item 12.22

The terms of reference had been updated as agreed.

Item 13.22

The dates of the Curriculum Conference had been changed. Invitations would be sent to Governors when the new date was confirmed.

19.22 DATA REPORT

The Assistant Principal Quality and HE commented on his report which contained much information in a broad number of areas. It was important for Governors to have a view of current performance.

Governor comments were invited.

A Governor commented on behaviour and attitudes. These were significantly below where the college wished to be. The Assistant Principal Quality and HE agreed. There appeared to be much low-level disruption and examples of students with low concentration and motivation. Disciplinary meetings had increased. Anecdotally, the situation seemed similar in many other colleges.

Attendance was discussed. The college was adopting an approach where all Covid related absence was being recorded as a way of showing lost learning. Not all colleges took this approach. College staff were spending much time in dealing with disciplinary matters, so the approach to these was being reviewed.

The Chair commented that the college approach seemed reasonable and that the DfE had not given specific guidance on recording attendance.

It was explained that behaviour management was being targeted not only at classroom behaviour but also at cross college behaviour in communal and other areas.

The Chair noted that the consistent application of a behaviour policy was more important than the actual policy. The Assistant Principal Curriculum outlined the main actions being taken on behaviour. It was clear that some staff needed support to build their confidence in managing behaviour, and also that lessons needed to be engaging to encourage attendance.

The Chair asked about retention and the reasons for students leaving. The Assistant Principal Curriculum explained the process for recording

withdrawals and also for making transfers between courses if appropriate. Student Transition Panels were held in the autumn term to ensure that any students moving between courses were supported. If students were looked after or had known safeguarding concerns these were flagged to the relevant staff as part of their course transfer or withdrawal.

It was confirmed that the majority of the data presented in the report was from a live system that staff could access to get up to date information.

There was a discussion about how students could be engaged in meaningful reflection on their learning. The Assistant Principal Quality and HE explained the digital Individual Learning Plans that students had access to. These did require reflective commentary to be added, although some students found this difficult. Staff were keen to improve this area.

Governors **resolved** to **receive** the Data Report.

20.22 CURRICULUM REPORT

The Assistant Principal Curriculum outlined the highlights of his report:

- The T Level roll out was continuing. Governors noted the details in the written report that set out which courses were running, which had recruited well and which were not popular. Plans for next year were noted;
- Work placements for T Levels were difficult to secure in some areas;
- Plans to deliver A Levels were continuing to be developed, and in some areas decisions on whether a T Level or an A Level was a better option were needed.

A recap of recent discussions on A Levels was given. The intention was to offer a package that included the most popular A Levels in Walsall, plus a partner employer to work with and a clear HE progression option.

Governors discussed and endorsed the A Level plans. It was noted that it would be extremely important to market the A Level pathway appropriately to ensure that it was differentiated from the offer in local schools, and seen as adding value.

The Chair commented on the need for a supportive teaching and learning package to ensure success for staff. The Assistant Principal Curriculum agreed. The college wished to self-assess as outstanding by September 2023, so needed to have consistently outstanding teaching throughout 2022/23. The ways in which staff would develop teaching practice for A Levels was discussed. The Chair felt it important for Exec to set expectations. The Assistant Principal Curriculum wished to have an inclusive approach where staff could make their own suggestions, although he did particularly favour the 21st Century Learning Design Framework.

The Framework and pedagogical approach was discussed. Working collaboratively was felt to be a priority. It was hoped that translating the approach to classroom practice would help with managing behaviour and attendance.

Governors endorsed the use of the Framework as it appeared to be highly adaptable.

There was a discussion about the types of students to recruit to ensure success in A Levels.

The Chair noted that T Levels appeared to be working well so far.

Returning to his report, the Assistant Principal Curriculum commented on:

- Reports from recent Deep Dive work, and how they had been prepared.

Governors commented on the format and contents of the reports. The report format and review process were explained. A Deep Dive took place once every two weeks and was led by a member of SMT. There would be 18 in total across the academic year. The Chair observed that there were many actions but that not all were sufficiently SMART and clear. He questioned whether the process was sustainable in terms of time needed and whether the actions were precise enough for managers to understand when they had been completed.

There was a lengthy discussion about the Deep Dives processes and outcomes. A Governor commented that a smaller number of more targeted actions linked to the Strategic Ambitions may be useful.

The Staff Governor commented on her own involvement in a recent Deep Dive in her curriculum area.

The Assistant Principal Curriculum was aware of Deep Dive activities also taking place in other colleges. It was a new process at Walsall so would continue to evolve. He was happy to take on board the feedback received. The most important aspect was whether the process was improving student outcomes.

Governors **resolved** to **receive** the Curriculum Report.

21.22 QUALITY ASSURANCE REPORT

The Assistant Principal Quality and HE presented his report and noted that the Executive level QIP had 13 areas for improvement, the details of which were in the table in the written report. The college had self-assessed as Good but more pace was needed to address areas going forwards.

A Governor commented on the safeguarding workload, which appeared very high at present. The Chair reported on his visit as Safeguarding Link Governor earlier in the term. This had covered caseload, multi-agency working and record keeping.

The Chair led a discussion about Learning Walks and asked the Staff Governor what the staff view of them was. The Staff Governor responded that most staff welcomed the opportunity for feedback on their practice and felt that the current process was better than the previous observations framework.

The Chair asked how feedback from Learning Walks would lead to improvements in classroom practice. The Assistant Principal Quality and HE explained the multi-faceted approach and how the results would be

used. Outcomes could include coaching and target setting for improvements.

There were 500 staff in scope for Learning Walks and 60 trained observers.

Governors asked about general wellbeing of staff and what support was in place. The Assistant Principal Quality and HE noted issues in relation to managing behaviour, as discussed earlier. This undoubtedly affected wellbeing for some staff. Measures in place to manage behaviour were outlined. The college had a range of wellbeing support measures in place for staff to access.

Governors **resolved** to **receive** the Quality Assurance Report

22.22 APPRENTICESHIPS AND COMMERCIAL REPORT

The Director of Apprenticeships and Workbased Learning presented her section of the report.

Governors noted that:

- The application to ROATP had been approved, which gave the college permission to continue to offer apprenticeships;
- New provision with the University of Worcester was going well;
- There had been some delays to End Point Assessments (EPAs) due to Covid disruption;
- Achievements were currently tracking in line with expectations;
- Learning Walks were taking place but there had been no Deep Dives to date;
- A review of Smart Assessor usage in the delivery of apprentices had been conducted. This identified areas of good and poor practices and the impact of these. A Smart Assessor Reset Plan had been created and disseminated to all Apprenticeship Sector Managers which was started in January 2022. There was a detailed action plan;
- KPIs for vocational coaches had been agreed;
- There had been excellent feedback from the recent Employment Gateway survey.

The Assistant Principal Commercial Development presented the remaining sections of the report, which covered:

- Subcontracted provision, including data for starts, retention and achievements. Both contracts were performing well and there were no concerns;
- Progress to date with the development of a Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP);
- College involvement in the Skills Accelerator Programme.

Questions and comments were invited.

Governors noted excellent retention rates in the provision within this area. Further details about the use of Smart Assessor were requested. The Director of Apprenticeships and Workbased Learning responded that she was reviewing to ensure that it was used consistently across the college and that staff had the skills to make best use of it.

Governors **resolved** to **receive** the Apprenticeships and Commercial Report.

23.22 HIGHER EDUCATION REPORT

The report was presented by the HE Development Manager, and gave an update on key aspects of the provision:

- The Access and Participation Plan had been re-written for 2022-27, taking account of changes to OfS requirements and also removing the effects of provision at LCCA, which had now ceased. The college Assessment Policy was to be updated;
- The importance of HE student voice, which was being supported this year by the two Student Governors, both of whom were HE students;
- Data on school attainment and university access, as set out in the written report;
- Funding had been secured for the Aspire to HE project. This would fund activities for Level 3 students considering applying for HE courses in 2023;
- HE achievement at Walsall College, which was 86.7%;
- The HE aspects of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), as published in the college's Annual EDI Report;
- The HE Graduation ceremony had been postponed but would be held on 12 May 2022;
- 14 Learning Walks had been held in HE provision to date. The key emerging themes were being reviewed;
- The results of the HE Induction survey showed that overall satisfaction was high;
- There were several changes to the partnership arrangements with local HEIs, and these were set out in the written report;
- The Gecko (Erasmus +) programme, which offered work experience placements around the world for students who want to complement their main core study with international work experience. This had been reintroduced to Colleges and Universities, and provided vocational training for young people. Students who are involved with the programme receive a 'real life' experience in the field of work of their choice, and resilience and independence for their future career goals. The college had advertised this opportunity for students aged 17 and over, looking at potential placements in Italy, Spain, Germany.

Questions and comments were invited.

The Chair commented on the range of support and facilities available to attract students into HE at Walsall College, which he felt were excellent. He also noted that with the current T Level students in college, many wished to progress into HE so there was already a potential pipeline of future HE students.

There was a discussion about the curriculum areas offered, including that health pathways were much in demand at this time.

The Access and Participation Plan was considered. It was acknowledged as difficult for FE colleges to use OfS data sets for comparison purposes, although OfS were keen for colleges to do so. The Plan had been updated to remove the effects of the former provision at LCCA. Recruitment and

retention for HE at Walsall remained strong and numbers were in line with previous years.

Governors **resolved** to **receive** the Higher Education Report.

13.22 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 29 June 2022 at 1630 hrs.

The meeting ended at 1900 hrs.

How Governors challenged management		Impact of meeting on College	
19.22	Questioned the reasons for students leaving college.		
20.22	Asked how staff would develop teaching practice for A Level delivery and how Exec would set expectations for this.		
20.22	Questioned whether the Deep Dives process was sustainable and whether action plans were sufficiently clear for staff to understand when an action had been completed.		
20.22	Asked how feedback from Learning Walks would lead to improvements in classrooms.		